Whitefields Solicitors

Complaints Handling Policy

1 We are committed to providing a high-quality legal service.

2 We acknowledge that we may not always get it right, so if something has gone wrong, including in relation to our charges, we need you to tell us. This will help us to improve our standards of service.

3 How do I make a complaint?

3.1 You can contact us in writing (by letter or email) or by telephone.

3.2 In the first instance, it may be helpful to contact the person who is working on your case to discuss your concerns and we will do our best to resolve any issues. If you do not feel able to discuss your concerns with them, please contact the person responsible for the overall supervision of your matter, who will be named in the client care letter we sent you at the beginning of your matter.

3.3 If you do not feel able to raise your concerns with either of these people, or you are unsatisfied with their response, please contact Mr. Saqib Malik who has overall responsibility for complaints and whose contact details are: Mr. Saqib Malik, Partner, Whitefields Solicitors, 384-388 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London E17 9AA or email: info@whitefieldslaw.co.uk

3.4 To help us to understand your complaint, and in order that we do not miss anything, please ensure your written Letter is clearly marked 'formal complaint' and tell us:

3.4.1 your full name and contact details;

3.4.2 what you think we have got wrong;

3.4.3 how you would like your complaint to be resolved; and

3.4.4 your file reference number (if you have it).

3.5 If you require any help in making your complaint we will try to help you.

4 How will you deal with my complaint?

4.1 We will write to you within five working days acknowledging your complaint, enclosing a copy of this policy.

4.2 We will investigate your complaint. This will usually involve:

4.2.1 reviewing your complaint;

4.2.2 reviewing your file(s) and other relevant documents; and

4.2.3 liaising with the person who dealt with your matter.

4.3 We may also need to ask you for further information or documents. If so, we will ask you to provide the information within a specific period of time.

4.4 We will update you on the progress of your complaint at appropriate times.

4.5 We may also, if appropriate, invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. You do not have to attend if you do not wish to or if you are unable to. We will be happy to discuss the matter with you by telephone**.**

4.6 We will write to you at the end of our investigation to tell you what we have done and what we propose to do to resolve your complaint. Where possible, we will aim to do this within 28 days of the date of our letter of acknowledgement. If for any reason it is felt the complaint cannot be replied to within 28 days then a letter will be sent to **you indicating** the likely timescale for when a full reply could be given.

5 What to do if we cannot resolve your complaint

5.1 The Legal Ombudsman can help you if we are unable to resolve your complaint ourselves. They will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your matter.

OR

5.2 We have eight weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time you may be able to complain to the Legal Ombudsman. This applies if you are an individual, a business with fewer than 10 employees and turnover or assets not exceeding a certain threshold, a charity or trust with a net income of less than £1m, or if you fall within certain other categories (you can find out more from the Legal Ombudsman—www.legalombudsman.org.uk). The Legal Ombudsman will look at your complaint independently and it will not affect how we handle your matter.

5.3 Before accepting a complaint for investigation, the Legal Ombudsman will check that you have tried to resolve your complaint with us first. If you have, then you must take your complaint to the Legal Ombudsman:

5.3.1 within six months of receiving a final response to your complaint;

and

5.3.2 no more than one year from the date of the act or omission being complained about; or

5.3.3 no more than one year from the date when you should reasonably have known there was cause for complaint.

5.4 If you would like more information about the Legal Ombudsman, please contact them.

Contact details

Visit: www.legalombudsman.org.uk

Call: 0300 555 0333 between 10.00 to 16.00

Email: enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk

Legal Ombudsman PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

6 What to do if you are unhappy with our behaviour

6.1 The Solicitors Regulation Authority can help if you are concerned about our behaviour. This could be for things like dishonesty, taking or losing your money or treating you unfairly because of your age, a disability or other characteristic.

6.2 Visit its website to see how you can raise your concerns with the SRA | Reporting a solicitor or firm to us | Solicitors Regulation Authority

7 What will it cost?

7.1 We will not charge you for handling your complaint.

7.2 Please note that if we have issued a bill for work done on the matter, and all or some of the bill is not paid, we may be entitled to charge interest on the amount outstanding. This is explained in our Terms of Business.

7.3 The Legal Ombudsman service is free of charge.